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### Effective Methods of Improving Education in American Society

The system of education in the United States of America has proven to be successful over recent generations. America has provided some of the greatest minds of the past century.

However, the past decade has brought about a decline in American education. Although America has grown industrially, this seems to have had a negative effect on education. Literacy rates have declined and dropout rates are the highest they have been in years. America's reputation as a country known for its excellent educational programs has dropped considerably. America has also not kept up with rivaling world powers. In fact, America has ceased to be one of the world leaders on education. According to a report by UVA Today, America is not even ranked in the top ten in a list of the most educated countries in the world ("Report" par. 1). This could be the result of the unqualified teachers that fill America's schools, especially public schools, and the insufficient government funding that hampers the success the education system is capable of.

With certain revisions, America could easily save its failing education system. Vast improvements in the literacy rates and general education of students in America's public schools can be strategically achieved by increased government funding to support state and national level reform programs that would provide necessary changes in teacher certification, student workloads, and available resources, including technological resources, that are essential for the advancement of education in American society.

One of the main problems America's education system is facing today is the poor certification of some of its teachers and their lack of involvement in the development of their students. Though colleges claim they provide a great foundation of skills that teachers can access when called to do so in the actual field of teaching, they do a rudimentary job in providing teachers the knowledge they need to teach the subjects they are trained to teach. In fact, a recent literacy entrance exam for the Massachusetts Board of Education was failed by fifty-nine percent of the applicants (Mezzacappa par. 1). This clearly shows a lack of preparation that teachers have. Colleges should implement a new style of teaching educators that involves more lessons on the actual subject matter new educators would be teaching their students. This more profound knowledge would allow for teachers to be able to teach better naturally since they would know different ways to approach a math problem or a different way to analyze a historical event. Students, as well as teachers, would also benefit from increased teacher involvement in the classroom. Students naturally responded better when they feel like they are cared for (Olson par. 27). By increased teacher involvement, students would grow closer to the teacher and become able to communicate their individual needs much more effectively without fear of being judged or ridiculed by an uncaring teacher. This breaking down of barriers between teachers and students is extremely important to the social development of young students who may feel intimidated in the classroom.

Another effective method of raising student literacy rates and general education among students can be found in the revision of the student workload. While some students may feel like the workload is at their level, other students may feel that the workload is too easy. This can cause laziness in gifted students and, therefore, lead to poor study habits that can hamper their success in schooling beyond high school. An increased workload would provide gifted students

with the knowledge they desire and ensure a well-educated, and less lazy, workforce for America. Middle level students would also benefit from an increased workload. While maybe not appreciating an increased workload as much as gifted students, middle level students would also have a much stronger knowledgebase than before and, therefore, be able to perform more efficiently in American society. However, an increased workload may pose problems for students that do not fall into the gifted or middle level categories. All schools should implement a program that would allow students to regain their credit for a class if they were to fail that class (Bottoms par. 23). This would be able to restore the confidence students have in their abilities and, ultimately, allow them to perform more efficiently.

This new curriculum should naturally focus on all aspects of education which includes language arts, social studies, math, and science; however, it should focus specifically on the areas of math and science, the two fields of study that American students seem to have the most problems in. These problems can be developed at young ages, and the causes are most likely due to unprepared parents or teachers. As a result, it is crucial to nurture the development of math and science skills at the earliest age possible. Without the necessary lessons students need to be able to grasp these concepts, they are at a clear disadvantage with students who receive acceptable teaching in these areas of study. Author Gene Bottoms suggests correcting this problem at the middle school level due to the fact that those particular schooling years are when students are becoming teenagers and are beginning to make the transfer into high school, the school level where students begin to show the most problems in math and science (par. 8). Some states have already taken the initiative to increase standards for graduation. High schools around the United States are beginning to require that students pass certain tests, aptly named end-of-course tests, which show that students have mastered the subjects they took during the school

year (Olson par. 49). These tests are a great achievement because they usually are effective in determining the job teachers are doing. By analyzing these tests, schools could then weed out ineffective teachers. They could also develop new methods of preparation for such tests and, therefore, improve the education of their students.

Government assistance in state and national school systems is also crucial to improving the current education situation. While some capitalists may disapprove of such government control, government is an especially helpful tool in social change. Education is an example of this. Authors Bowman, Donovan, and Burns all agree that the government should form a stronger national curriculum that supports the development of America's youth (315). This type of government-regulated curriculum would ensure similar education for all of America's youth. This type of regulation should also be established at the state level. States should add on to the strict curriculum were they see fit in order to promote student growth, or possibly focus more on certain subjects that a certain state may be more suited to. States could also look into developing other social programs that would aid the development of the minds of young Americans. These programs could include things such as afternoon programs that would focus on tutoring in subjects students are struggling in, recreational activities that would allow them to interact with their peers, and creative outlets such as music or art that would allow students to relieve stress and experience new aspects of education that are not curriculum-based.

Technology should also be explored as a tool for educational development in the recent future. As the federal government continues to grant loans to businesses for technological development, it is inevitable that technology will become a large part of the classroom. As a result of this government funding, technologies such as computers are already beginning to become major tools in the classroom in wealthier schools around the United States. Computers

are extremely useful due to the fact that they offer access to large amounts of sources for students to use in research and for general learning. They also provide ways for teachers to organize student work, demonstrate difficult ideas, and relay information in overall more effective ways. However, some educators believe computers aren't the key to enlightenment. Authors and educators Bennett, Finn, and Cribb argue that computers are harmful to students because they take away from a true learning experience that involves interacting with the real world and not with a computer-generated reality world (620). While they make a good point, computers come with all kinds of tools that can block distracting programs. Schools, for example, use these helpful tools to block programs such as email and instant messaging. Also, computers can demonstrate scenarios that may be extremely difficult to duplicate in the real world. One must also understand that the computer is still continuing to grow and become an increasingly more important part of everyday life for people around the globe. In addition to educational programs, exposure to computers would increase students' technological skills and prepare them for jobs that focus on using computers as part of the daily routine in the workplace.

Educational advancement is the key to the future for America. There are essentially no negative outcomes by working towards improving the educational system. Since a proper education gives citizens the knowledge they need to perform successfully in life, improving the education of every American would make large strides towards improving other aspects of everyday life. The standard of living would naturally increase because many more Americans would be able to perform jobs that require an education and, therefore, increase the amount of useful items available to the public. As well as social advancement, improving education would also lead to technological advancement. New technology is almost always created by the educated. This means that there would be a higher chance of someone creating some sort of

helpful new technology. These social and technological advancements are all made possible by strategic educational advancement. It is evident that the three are related. Hopefully, American citizens will soon realize this obvious fact and begin working towards the educational revision this country needs.